

Are They Illegal Questions Or Trick Questions?

A female candidate was asked, "Do you plan to have children?" She was taken aback by the question and wasn't sure how to answer. However, she had three choices:

1. Answer the question honestly even though she did not want to.
2. Tell the interviewer it is none of his business and the question is illegal.
3. Deal with the concern behind the question, ignoring the illegal question itself.

How would you answer the question if you were the female candidate?

The best answer is "C."

An appropriate answer from the candidate might have been, "Whether or not I plan to have children in the future is not really relevant to my career. I plan to work and have a career no matter what happens in my personal life."

Why is this type of question asked in an interview? Why are interviewers concerned about your plans to reproduce, your marital status and your retirement plans? It's simple; they want to make sure you are the solution to a problem, not the source of more headaches.

When the female candidate was asked her plans regarding future motherhood, the interviewer may have been trying to determine whether she was in for the long-term or just until the company could pay for the birth of her firstborn. It is clearly a **discriminatory question**, one that would probably never be asked of a male candidate, and it is illegal!

Technically, it is illegal for an interviewer to ask anything

personal that is not directly job-related. Off-limit questions include (but are not limited to): information regarding your age, marital status, country of origin, religion, sexual preference and health status. Almost any legal information about you is illegal in the job interview.

There are some exceptions to this rule, which might be confusing. Personal questions considered to be job-related usually are allowed in the interview or on the job application.

Legal Personal Questions:

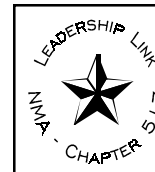
Have you ever been convicted of a crime? Depending on the type of job you are applying for, this could be critical.

Can you show proof of your eligibility to work in the US? Every new employee, regardless of place of origin, must provide such documentation during the first days on the job.

Can you perform the job's essential functions with or without reasonable accommodation? This question must be accompanied by a job description covering the essential functions.

The concerns behind these questions are relevant to the job's requirements and performance. The interviewer wants to know if you can report to work and do the job. Any information that could be enlightening is important. But the interviewer's questions should focus on the job and your qualifications to do it.

By becoming aware of illegal questions, you will be prepared to deal with them if confronted in an interview. Pre-interview thinking and preparation can spare some embarrassing or uncomfortable moments during the interview.



Leadership Link Newsletter

Leadership Link Chapter # 517

Website: www.ci.lincoln.ne.us/city/person/NMA_L/index.htm

P.O. Box 85224 Lincoln NE 68501-5224

MAY 2003

Volume 7 Issue 10

Job Stress Management Tips to Start the Day

Stress.
Pressure.
Anxiety.
Headaches.
Tweakin'.
Tension.

Whatever you call it, it's still STRESS!

And, there is no shortage of it in today's fast-paced, keep truckin' environments with impatient supervisors and technologically advanced workplaces. What can you do?

Consider these statistics:

- * Stress-related disorders are fast becoming the most prevalent reason for worker disability according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

- * Job stress and related problems cost American companies an estimated \$200 billion or more annually through absenteeism, turnover, accidents, etc.

- * The World Health Organization calls job stress a "worldwide epidemic."

Obviously stress has a powerful impact on us. Can we eliminate the stressors of modern work life? No -- and it's a good thing we can't. We need a certain degree of stress in our lives to spur us to action, challenge our perception of what we are capable of, and help us reach new levels of performance. The trick is learning how to manage the stress versus being overwhelmed by it.

Bill Delano, founder of Job Stress Help, an Internet service that provides confidential, individualized advice via email to those experiencing job stress, has these suggestions:

In with the Good Air, Out with the Bad: Take a breathing break. Frequent short breaks during the day allow you to breathe deeply and relax your mind, preventing stress buildup.

Know the Enemy: What, exactly, is stressing you out? Is it your job? Your home life? Your relationships? Without knowing the root of the problem, you are unlikely to resolve it. If you are having difficulty identifying the source of your stress, seek professional help from your Employee Assistance Program or a mental health professional.

Move It or Lose It: Begin an exercise program. Exercise



helps release endorphins, which relieves stress.

Let Go: Recognize the difference between the things you can control and the things you cannot. Make a list of these two categories. Starting today, make a pact with yourself to stop stressing about the things in your job you have no control over.

Beware of the To Do List: Take note of all the good work you do and give yourself credit for it. Set short-term goals and allow yourself to take satisfaction in achieving them.

Develop a Tough Skin: Try not to personalize any criticism you receive. Look at negative comments as constructive criticism that allows you to improve your work. If however, the criticism is verbally abusive, e.g., your

boss yells at you or uses vulgar language, discuss this problem with your manager or human resources department.

Share the Load: Delegate or share work whenever possible. Don't fall into the trap of thinking you are the only person who can do the job right. Your coworkers and boss might start to buy into that concept as well.

Don't Make Work a Four Letter Word: Job stress builds when our minds are constantly focused on work. Strive for balance in your life. Make time for family, friends, hobbies and, most importantly, fun.

Know Your Rights: Read the [Guide to Workplace Law by the American Bar Association](#). It's important to know your rights as an employee or employer.

Although learning to manage a stressful job is important, sometimes it makes more sense to leave it. How can you determine when it's time to give your job the heave-ho? You know it's time to quit when:

1. You've tried all the appropriate channels and methods for resolving your situation, to no avail (or the appropriate channels are not made available).
2. Your boss is intimidating, disrespectful or demeaning to you.
3. You are so bored on the job that you are exhausted by the end of the day. If you don't have an upwardly mobile career path that challenges you to grow professionally, it's time to look for a more interesting position.

Leadership Link
Chapter 517
P.O. Box 85224
Lincoln NE 68501-5224



CITY/COUNTY EMPLOYEES
CALLED TO ACTIVE DUTY,
WE SALUTE YOU!

Larry Edwards,
Fire Department
Karla Welding,
Public

JUNE MEETING

Tuesday, June 3, 2003

*Join us for our annual
Awards Luncheon*

*Governor's Mansion
1425 H Street*

11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m.

*\$8.50 Chicken Salad Meal
Presented by the Mayor*



Phone your HOT tips in today!

Leadership Link seeks ideas for future program speakers, call 441-7474 with your program tip.

2003 Southwest and North Central Leadership Conference

By Jan Lehmkuhl
National Director & North Central Area Chair

What a great trip!

As your Area Chair, I represented the Chapters of our region at the Southwest/North Central Leadership Conference April 24-26 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The conference is designed to provide leadership training for NMA members, with a special focus on newly elected Chapter Officers and/or Chapter Committee Chairs.

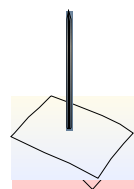
We began the conference by previewing the third module of a four part series of NMA's FaciliSkills training. Module three, titled "Transformational Leadership" is designed to empower a facilitator

to transform a collection of individuals assigned to work together into a true team who begin to work with a shared mission, understand the strength gained through diversity, and discover a new-found mutual trust and respect for one another. We all learned more about what motivates people, how to deal with multiple personality types, and how to shift from individual dynamics to group dynamics. The workshop was highly interactive and combined fun with valuable lessons for all. I enjoyed announcing each of the award winners from the North Central Region during one of the luncheon programs. As announcements were made, attendees from the award winning Chapters were recognized. Five NC Chapters and the Nebraskaland Council were recognized for their 2002 performance.

Alyce Sarno, CM, director of Site Operations, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company, Marietta, GA, presented an interactive workshop on Project Management. Lessons learned through this experience will benefit attendees with individual workplace processes in addition to Chapter operations. Other workshop topics included Officer Training, Community Service, Recognition, Professional Development, Membership Development, and Ideas for Success. One of our keynote speakers, Darryl Moore, executive director of the Colorado Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Denver, Colo., spoke to us about fund raising for nonprofit organizations.

Again, the National Management Association did a great job at providing training that will be useful within our Chapters; and also, useful to other organizations in which attendees are active.

Problems & Solutions Managerial Advice by Georgia Glass, Personnel Director



Send your questions to Dmullins@ci.lincoln.ne.us via email for consideration. Questions may be reworded because of space limitations.

Dear Georgia:

I work in an office where several of us are assigned the same responsibilities, work hours, and days, etc. All of us, for the most part, do our jobs well. However, one of the employees doesn't "pull her share of the load". She sometimes reports late to work, leaves early, and seemingly is "always" on her phone with personal calls. The rest of us think this is unfair, as our supervisor is just too busy to see her doing these things. So, she receives the same pay, raises, etc as we do, even though she works less than us. What should we do, as it is very frustrating to the rest of us?

Dear Manager:

If you believe that a co-worker is abusing the rules, i.e. personal phone calls, tardiness, etc. you need to bring this to the attention of the supervisor. If you notice that this one employee "does not pull her weight" I don't understand why the supervisor does not also notice this. Your statement that the supervisor is too busy to notice is troublesome. It is the supervisor's primary responsibility to supervise. If this person is too busy doing something besides supervising staff then I am thinking that the supervisor's duties need to be reviewed and perhaps changed. Discuss your concerns with the supervisor. I never want to suggest "going over someone's head" but if you think that the supervisor is part of the problem then you may want to consider going to the person next up the chain of command.

Leadership Link Executive Board

President - Colleen Floth	1-8690
President Elect - Cindy Lukan	1-7474
Past President - Bill Kostner	1-6009
Secretary - Joan Ray	1-7515
Treasurer - Betty Surls	1-8325
Program - Kathy Smith,	1-8309
Program - Larry Worth	1-8600
Awards - Mary Johnson	1-7416
Member Relations - E.J. Schumaker	1-8036
Member Relations - Lori Cook	1-8040
Community Services - Audrey Leming	1-6130
Public Relations - Diane Mullins	1-7717
Web Site - Trish Owen.....	1-7488
Professional Development - Tim Pratt	1-7593
Professional Development - Steve Owen	1-7867
Nebraskaland Council - Terri Storer.....	1-7269
National Director - Jan Lehmkuhl	479-5714
Associate Director - Robert "Bob" Lundberg.....	471-5027

National Website: <http://www.nmal.org>

My favorite part of each Leadership Conference is the American Enterprise Speech Contest. This year, the competition was phenomenal! Each high school student participant showed professionalism and extreme talent as they described in a 4-6 minute speech what the American Enterprise System means to them. I wish each of you could have heard these leaders of tomorrow. The results of the North Central Region were:

First Place (\$2000 savings bond), Michah Hardt, Highlands Ranch High School, Highlands Ranch, Colorado, representing the Lockheed Martin Rocky Mountain Leadership Association.

Second Place (\$1500 savings bond), Aaron McHargue, Nebraska Christian High School, Central City, Nebraska, representing the Nebraska State Government Chapter.

Third Place (\$1000 savings bond), Kevin Hanson, Grinnell High School, Grinnell, Iowa, representing the Lennox Marshalltown Chapter.

The first place winner will represent our region at the NMA National Conference on September 21 in Detroit, Michigan where he will compete for a grand prize of \$10,000 in savings bonds.

Correspondence

Many thanks for the invitation to speak to the National Management Association/Lincoln Chapter members. I enjoyed the opportunity to speak to your members and to meet many of them. It was very thoughtful of your organization to present me with the gift of the desk clock. I promise I will use it in my office! With best regards,

--John A. Gale,
Secretary of State

New Officer Orientation

Heads UP!
August marks the month for new officer orientation after July installations. More to come in next month's issue of the Leadership Link Newsletter.

Step Up To Bat!

Leadership Link Needs You!

Looking for individuals to chair the 2003/2004 year committees:

Awards Programs Community Services

Contact Cindy Lukan,
441-7474

Everyone should take a swing at it!



Leadership Link Member Profile

Joan Ray, Secretary

If I could take a famous person to dinner, it would be Osama bin Laden & I'd slip him a Micky!

Free Time? Ha, ha, ha. (But, seriously....ha, ha, ha) No, really, I'm in my Junior year at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, taking night classes and majoring in English while working toward my bachelor of arts degree. I also belong to a bridge group (we're not really a club, but we have fun). I visit my family and friends, and I enjoy a good walk and reading a good book.

My favorite restaurant is Lazlo's Brewery. I love the beer bread as well as the beer!

I joined Leadership Link because the members seemed to be the good, solid professionals with whom I wanted to network. When several of my friends joined, it seemed like a good time to come aboard.

If I could build my dream home any place in the world, I'd build it in Tahiti on the beach. Lying in the sun, listening to the waves breaking gently against the white, sandy beaches would be most soothing as I leisurely sipped my pina colada(s). And more so, the number one reason is because it's WARM!

My horoscope sign is Capricorn. I don't know if it fits or not because I'm not "into" all of that. Some might say it does ... The Old Goat? What do You think?

Effective Leadership Requirements

Do you have what it takes?

Do your employees *think* you have what it takes?

The key to effective leadership is building trust and building a relationship with your employees that promotes an atmosphere of inspiration, open communication, motivation and role modeling.

Sarcasm or smart-aleck remarks tears down open communications and builds mistrust, which is counterproductive.

Leaders must know and accept others - and themselves. Every manager can take steps to improve communications, cross train and understand the nature of employee relationships from the ground up. The two most important actions employers and manager can make are building a rapport and lead by example.

The characteristic considered most important in a good leader are humor, honesty and fair play, imagination and curiosity, vision, courage, loyalty, stamina and strength.